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IN FEAR AND DOLE.

WILLIAM BECKENHAM.



600079812X

IN FEAR AND DOLE.



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POEMS

BY

WILLIAM BECKENHAM.

Two foolish halves of foolish whole
On muddy ball are whirled through space;
Loving, they love in fear and dole;
Breeding, they breed a foolish race.



LONDON:
JAS. WADE, 18, TAVISTOCK STREET,
COVENT GARDEN.
1882.

280 . 0 . 872 .

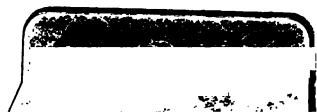
P R E F A C E.

THIS volume represents the use or misuse of odd moments. Some of its constituents may offend, but the Author claims to be free. Freedom is, however, consistent with respect for what is respectable. Views held sacred for ages are not fit subjects for ridicule; and were it otherwise, the Author finds no pleasure in scoffing. Nevertheless, if anything be thought untrue, who thinks so has a right to say so, not forgetting, however, his own fallibility. And this is particularly to be remembered in dealing with spiritual claims, seeing that then the responsibility is greater. For all which, who credits anything may energetically uphold it, all possibilities of error notwithstanding.

Not far off is another matter. The Author believes in good and evil, and where he places morality is not lower but higher than theologians assert. If,




600079812X



IN FEAR AND DOLE.

TEMPTED.


 LOVE, that weird sorceress,
 Setteth eager hearts on fire;
 Her law is to be lawless,
 Her freedom
 The thralldom of desire.
 Duty, the stern spirit,
 Bindeth with an iron chain:
 Strong peace will come from merit;
 Virtue hath
 Itself for its own gain.

I would tell a little tale
 Of a dweller in this vale
 Named Margaret Moir.

Pure her soul and fair her face,
 Lovely too, with modest grace,
 Is Margaret Moir.

But a dark and awful shame
 Very nearly soiled the name
 Of Margaret Moir.

Parents both were 'neath the sward,
 And the orphan's lot was hard,
 Poor Margaret Moir !

Not a friend save grandame old,
One whose heart was very cold,
Had Margaret Moir.

As the springtime bringeth green,
Beauty came at seventeen
To Margaret Moir.

Then the yearnings of the dove,
Then the tender wish for love,
Moved Margaret Moir.

Soon across her pathway came
One whose dark eyes lit love's flame
For Margaret Moir.

Then was honey of delight,
And seemed all things very bright
To Margaret Moir.

Human bliss oft vexes Fate:
Stories of a lawful mate
Reached Margaret Moir,

Which were true—"She brought me woe;
Spouse, indeed, but bitter foe;
Say, Margaret Moir,

"Wilt thou share my lonely life?
All to me, and more than wife,
Is Margaret Moir.

"Loved one, cast all doubts away,
Let us both our hearts obey,
Sweet Margaret Moir."

Hearing him thus fondly speak,
Senses reeled and soul grew weak—
Ah ! Margaret Moir.

Longing eyes and hot cheeks now,
Heaving breast and flushing brow—
Oh ! Margaret Moir.

But the evil purpose fled,
And with shame was bent the head
Of Margaret Moir.

Stern her glance and firm her "No,"
As she bade her lover go—
Brave Margaret Moir !

"Child, thy sorrow may abide,
Hearts like thine but once confide ;
Yet, Margaret Moir,

"As the fruit of self-control,
Solemn joys will cheer thy soul :
Farewell ! Margaret Moir."

THE CONVICT OF SPACE.



REAMING, I mark a sinless race
That know not care nor fear ;
Their home is far away in space—
A bright, supernal sphere,

The golden glory of whose day
Sits lustrous on its gorgeous flowers ;
And when its great sun melts away,
Come, purple-clothed, the evening hours.

Next reigns a wondrous, dark-blue night,
In fragrant stillness, sweet ;
In glow of mazy, amber light,
Superb beyond conceit.

And now while gracious peace descends—
Blest dew that falls where sin is not—
I mark a teacher and his friends
Assembled in a flow'ry spot.

Their theme this night, "The Human Race,"
Ashamed, I hear discussed—
That history of dark disgrace,
Of falsehood, fraud, and lust.

"Oh ! listen, stainless souls, to one
Who fain would plead abating shame,
Mercy I crave, nor that alone,
For justice shall uphold my claim.

"Sorely tempted, and sadly weak,
Inured to sin from birth,
A bitter task have they who seek
The better things on Earth.

"As chaff before the driving wind,
As produce of a sullen soil,
As twigs that bend which way inclined,
Behave the fate-ruled sons of toil.

"This much in mitigation shown
Should bid hard thoughts disperse;
But Earth in one thing holds her own
Against the Universe.

"The Loves, those spirits sweet and pure,
Have thereon dwelt from age to age;
Our souls to noble deeds they lure,
Our labours cheer, our griefs assuage.

"Compassion, sweetest of them all,
The purest passion felt,
Finds millions answer to her call,
And even hard hearts melt.


"Then poise in equitable scales
The outcome of our troubled span,
And see the sum of evil fails
To overweigh man's love for man."

The ancient teacher seems to muse—
Our bloody, selfish wars,
And deeds of hate, do these accuse
Our Earth among the stars?

Ah ! all things said, the past is black,
What comes hereafter none may know ;
Perchance the final, doomful crack
Alone shall master sin and woe.

Standing amidst encircling tears,
The grave seer gently says—
“ Be cheered, the Helot of the spheres
Shall witness better days.”

THE RENEGADE.

EET thy affright,
O haggard soul !
For through the night
Loud thunders roll,
And hidden are the kings of light.

Seekest with pain
The better things ?
Bootless and vain ;
For clipped thy wings,
And never shalt thou soar again.

Levelled the shrine,
Whose sacred fire
Lit the divine,
Serene desire,
Which never more for thee will shine.

Withered the flowers
That erstwhile grew,
Gift of the powers
That love the true—
Vanished for aye, those happy hours.

Fallen thy pride,
And sad thy doom ;
Stern Truth will hide
In Shame's dark tomb
The sickly thing that failed when tried.

THE RENEGADE'S LAMENT.



PEACEFULLY grand aloft,
Southern winds low and soft,
Gently the Queen of Night
Woos, but in vain.

Not as it used to be,
When her lips yielded free
Honey of high delight
And sweetest pain.

Never, ah ! nevermore,
As in the days of yore,
As in the vanished hours
Of long ago.
Smothered the sacred fire,
Sullied the chaste desire,
Withered the mystic flowers,
Naught left but woe.

Punished for broken vow,
Fallen and ruined now,
Prey of the wolves of doom,
Spurned by the worst.
Ah ! I am sick with grief,
Nothing can give relief,
Bury me in the tomb
Of the accursed.

Erstwhile the midnight skies,
Gazing with solemn eyes,
Full of grand tenderness,
Conquered my soul.

Thenceforth I knew not rest,
Seeking with yearning zest,
In life's strange wilderness,
The hidden goal.


Noble, unselfish schemes,
High hopes and golden dreams,
Deep mysteries outpoured,
Meanings revealed.

These urged me day by day
Along the better way,
The law of Right my sword,
And Truth my shield.

Caught in the nets of Hell,
Alas! alas! I fell,
And now the white worms creep,
The serpents sting.

The glories of the past
Their backward shadows cast;
Dig, then, and bury deep
This loathly thing.

FOOLING.

 HIS is strange to me,
That I often see,
When the dawn-beams quiver,
When the midday glows,
When the shadows shiver,
As the red sun goes,
Sitting by a turbid river—
By a muddy stream that flows
Whence and whither no one knows.
Now with vacant visage staring,
Now with angry yearnings glaring,
Sitting there from morn till night,
A doleful, stupid-looking wight.

Prithee tell me, friend,
What mayst thou intend?
For when day is breaking,
And when noontide gleams,
And when owls are waking
From their purple dreams,
Ne'er this dreary bank forsaking,
Shirking useful ends and schemes,
Missing sight of nobler streams—
Thou, while fateful hours are flitting,
Here art ever vainly sitting—
Surely conduct most unwise!
Then feed not scorn, awake! arise!

Longing for the hills of Truth,
Yearning for the vales of Right,
Lured by visions of my youth,
Here I sit from morn till night—

Here I sadly wait.

Mark the wondrous, golden glow
Lighting up yon peaks and mists ;
There, though darkness reigns below,
A rich and lovely land exists.


Harsh is Fate !

Mine—my own, those hills and vales :
I am lord of that fair realm.
Science, with its ghastly tales,
Cannot, shall not overwhelm

This my sure belief.

Wonder not, then, if I wait,
Sitting here the livelong day,
Gazing at my grand estate.
O gloomy waters ! while ye stay
Ends not grief.

PRO.

 SAW a grim thing coming from the West,
 Across the sky—
A gloomy shadow, blighting what was best,
 That they should die;
But when it reached the mystagogic East,
 I saw it lie
Dissolved in light ; and then its dark rule ceased
 Eternally.

CON.



OW now, black ghost !
Thy purpose tell ;
When bright hopes boast

I see thee well ;
When pride soars high,
And lifts my spirit to the radiant sky,
I fear thee most.

Gaunt, ghastly thought,
Keep far away ;
Is mankind naught
But soulless clay ?
Can dead stuff live,
And by an aimless, bootless negative
Be grandly wrought ?

Dread meaning, cast
The veil aside ;
Thy face may blast
The ends of pride.
But Truth is right,
Though in the ebon waves of endless night
Hope sink at last.

ILLOGICAL.



MAIDEN glad,
Whose face was formed to please,
Met with a poet dearn and sad,
Under the chestnut trees.

That poet sad,
Whose mind was ill at ease,
Detained the maiden fair and glad
Under the chestnut trees.

Said he, "Gay lies
On eve falls such as these
Illuminate the phantom skies,
And gild the chestnut trees.

"Joy brings forth Grief,
Fulfilling Fate's decrees ;
The season of the withered leaf
Yearns for the chestnut trees.

"Youth flies away,
Like chaff before the breeze,
And Love is doomed to swift decay,
Just like the chestnut trees.

"Whether is best—
Being, that strange disease,
Or tranquil, never-ending rest
Beneath the chestnut trees?"

Answered the maid,
" Your mood but ill agrees
With certain somethings erstwhile said
Under these chestnut trees.

" Who, blessed with sight,
The world's sweet beauty sees,
Its wondrous glory and delight,
Yet 'neath the chestnut trees,

" Vents words of blame,
Sophistic, hateful pleas,
And gloomy scoffing. Ah ! what shame !
Spurn him, ye chestnut trees !

" A foolish heart,
Which your avowal frees,
Shall learn to scorn : farewell—we part !
Good-bye, dear chestnut trees."

She turned, then screamed ;
Disowned, he dared to seize
Old rights by force ; and dark eyes gleamed
Under the chestnut trees.

Fair optimist,
Say, did it much displease
To be so violently kissed
Under the chestnut trees ?

NEAR.

TN sombre hours
Portentous thoughts take root,
Producing purple flow'rs
And bitter fruit.

Once reckoned bane,
And none such grapes would suck,
But now for loss or gain
Full many pluck.

Amongst them one,
Who dreaming heard with awe
A hoary sage discern
The ancient law.

Hard fixed his gaze
On priestess pale and wan,
His liege of other days
Ere doubt began.

Weeping, she said, "The end draws near,
The echoes pass away ;
The spirit of this haunted sphere,
Who dwells in mists of dreadful fear,
Is conqueror to-day.

“ The shadow of his murky wings
 Surrounds the Earth with gloom ;
Dire monster with a thousand stings,
He sits beneath the base of things
 And speeds the hour of doom.

“ The flowers of my happy youth
 Sprang upward to the light ;
But now, through tears of bitter ruth,
I see the phantom sun of Truth
 Submit to endless night.

“ The stars fall helpless from the sky ;
The waves of horror roar ;
The grand hopes I implanted die ;
The virtues perish utterly ;
 Hell reigns for evermore.”

Whereon her aged servant spake :
 “ O priestess ! die in peace ;
Thy temple's mildewed pillars shake,
Thy sons, like rats, its courts forsake,
 Thy sacrifices cease.

“ But know the end is not as yet,
 That Right should yield to Wrong.
The hour which sees thy glory set
Conveys to Hell a sullen threat
 To be fulfilled ere long.

“ Come hitherwards a dogged few,
 Marching with silent speed,

To fight the ancient fight anew,
Servants of laws for ever true,
Supreme o'er every creed.

"No hirelings these to bend the knee
At Hope's unhallowed shrine,
Nor slaves of Fear. The high decree
Which spurs them on has made them free
For sterner tasks than thine.

"'Tis well! for hark, a frightful din
Is heard in every land;
Lies work without, and doubts within,
While foremost in the ranks of Sin
Self-serving virtues stand.

"The olden issues now give place,
No more the ages wait;
For Right and Wrong meet face to face,
And on the feeble Human Race
Are set the aims of Fate."

Ah! yes, the gorgeous fantasies
Have fled;
The old time's golden mysteries
Are dead;
The sweet conceptions of desire,
Which taught us erst
That Love made pure by sacred fire
To highest glories might aspire,
Are now dispersed.

But even so, and come what may,
Though evils stand in grim array,
Though faiths with all their fears decay,
And Hope's bright visions pass away,
 Mid screams of anguish and affright ;
Till the last born return to dust,
There ne'er shall fail on this Earth's crust
The staunchly true, and bravely just,
To serve that grand and solemn trust,
 The immutable Law of Right.


A LESSON.

RIGHT skies gleaming,
Fresh winds blowing,
Blue eyes beaming,
Red cheeks glowing,
Silver wavelets streaming,
Golden tresses flowing :
A summer's day is meet for play,
And down the beach went Nina Gray.

Sounds of weeping
And of railing,
Horror creeping,
Shame unveiling,
After sowing, reaping,
After laughing, wailing :
A summer's day is meet for play,
And onward pressed blithe Nina Gray.

Ah ! a frightful
Scene was pending,
Where delightful
Hues were blending,
Happiness, not rightful,
Found unlawful ending :
A summer's day is meet for play,
But homeward sped young Nina Gray.

THE SULLEN SPIRIT.

HE Moon's white hair is streaming,
And fools of peace are dreaming,
Bats fly past,
The shadows come and go ;
Dark and vast
Conceptions, fraught with woe,
Sit on my soul, Salathiel.

Pitiless and unsparing
Comes Dawn, her wild eyes glaring ;
Smiles and tears
Seem all unreal indeed ;
Ghastly fears
Rush from their holes to feed
On Earth's sad sons, Salathiel.

With Noon dire horrors enter ;
Quivers this planet's centre ;
Monstrous things
Are bred in these strange times ;
Trembling swings
The beam that weighs our crimes,
And see, it slants, Salathiel.

Be silent not unduly ;
How goes it, tell me truly,
 With the fray
On Armageddon's plain?
 Who's the day ?
Stands Justice still? ah! vain
Its struggle now, Salathiel.

The sable hosts, recorder,
Advance in compact order ;
 Wet thy eyes
And agonised thy face ;
 Hope's fond lies
That cheer our withered race
Screaming expire, Salathiel.

Still gazing? vain thy longing,
Our enemies are thronging
 To the field ;
Broken thy leader's sword,
 Crushed his shield ;
And things we have abhorred
Shall rule us soon, Salathiel.

Humid his brow and cheeks
 With dripping fear ;
Ah! now he speaks,
 Let's hear :

“ Damnation wins. The temple's veil is rent,
The sons of Virtue, far outnumbered, fly ;
Impurity assails the milk-white tent,
And Wrong's dark banner lours beneath the sky :—

But who come hither, is it so at last ?
Then now to see if Wrong can vanquish Right ;
Responsive to the visions of the past,
Stern Duty leads his heroes to the fight."

Can this be true—say where, rapt prophet, where ?
Hope of my youth, refresh these wearied eyes :
I see but black shapes flitting here and there,
Whilst the sick Earth breathes thickly on the skies.
Ah ! now it clears, yon steep hill they ascend ;
I see the sullen spirit in the van ;
The hour has come ; let's quickly hence, old friend,
To raise once more the tattered flag of Man.

THAT WHICH IS BETTER AND
NOBLER.

UNTO valley dark and drear,
Maiden with a lovely face,
Queen of sweetness and of grace,
Came divinely smiling:
Came and fixed her dazzling eyes
On the sons of tears and sighs,
On the slaves of care and fear,
Toilers of the valley drear,
Hearts and souls beguiling.
Wooded by numbers everywhere,
She appeared as proud as fair,
Wherefore when they could not win,
Many sought the Queen of Sin—
She who offers luscious joy,
And is neither cold nor coy;
But her mouth is full of bane.
Murko sought not either one;
Wherefore asked the brilliant maid,
“Woo me, for I may be won,
I for whom the just have prayed.”
“Not while work remains,” he said;
And her courting was in vain.
Brooking not such strange defeat,
Oft in whispers low and sweet,

Saying, "Loved one, there is bliss
In the honey of my kiss,
Certain peace that cannot cease;"
Him the lovely maiden wooed.
With the beast of poisonous claw
Fighting aye a stubborn fight,
Holding to the Iron Law,
Whether there should come delight,
Or perchance but endless night,
Dalliance chimed not with his mood.
Early in the days of youth,
Ere he sought the shrine of Truth,
Hireling hopes allured his soul,
Pointing to a blissful goal;
But an angel, dark and grim,
Spoke as follows unto him:
"Right is right, and Wrong is wrong,"
Words whose meaning clear and grand
Searched his spirit as with fire;
Nor in vain their stern command.
Working thence no more for hire,
Governed by a pure desire,
Murko stood erect and strong.
Whoso leads the higher life
Hath for portion toil and strife,
Waiting till the shades descend.
So with Murko, who for Right
Fought a long, determined fight,
Ere his turbulent career,
In the valley dark and drear,
Reached its tether—then an end.
Came that maiden fair and sweet

To the deathbed of the brave,
 Saying, "Thou shalt know defeat
 On the threshold of the grave;
 Long resisting, mine at last—
 Yes, my own by many ties,
 For the glory of thy past
 Decks thee as my rarest prize."
 Speaking thus she pushed away
 Weak hands making vain defence,
 And, ere Murko turned to clay,
 Thrilling joys seized every sense.
 Nathless the consummate bliss
 Of the maiden's magic kiss
 Did not reach the gloomy soul
 In its fort of self-control.
 "Right is right," the hero cried,
 Darkly frowning—and he died.

COUPLED.



WAY with mysteries,
 Let me be gay
 Beneath the smiling skies,
 Beside the dazzling bay.
 Set free from pain,
 I stroll along the beach,
 Hoping the brilliant main
 Some cheerful truths will teach.
 "Now I am he and she
 That were at first ;
 Four daughters came of me,
 Two blest and two accursed,
 Each two a pair of dark and fair.
 One spends her hours
 In making toys ;
 The other lours
 And soon destroys.
 United by a tie that none can sever,
 Making and marring they work on for ever.
 One aims at Right,
 And one at Wrong ;
 Struggling they fight,
 And both are strong.
 These too are joined by tie that none can sever ;
 Mutual their hate, and they shall fight for ever."

Ah ! always mysteries !
Can I be gay
Beneath the smiling skies,
Beside the dazzling bay,
Pursued by mysteries ?

CAUGHT.



ORMOND, roaming weirdsome dale,
Met a maiden in a veil :
Fain he would woo,
Saying, " I will be true ;
Let us as lovers be ;
Sweet, I would thy visage see."
Quoth the maid, " Who seeth my face
Doth not hanker for embrace ;
Straightway he is stricken sore,
Yearneth not to know me more."
Ormond, wond'ring, passed her by,
Musing, " It may be so ;
Doubtless glamour-working maid,
Netting victims in this glade ;
Bright the sun and blue the sky,
Why then be seeking woe ?"
Glowing flowers and fragrant air
Imparted tingling bliss,
Nature seemed supremely fair,
But soon he tired of this ;
Hastened to the haunted dale,
To that maiden with the veil,
Saying, " I still would woo,
Let us as lovers be,
And thou shalt find me true ;
Sweet, I would thy visage see."

Saying naught, she showed her face ;
 Straightway he was stricken sore,
Did not hanker for embrace,
 Did not yearn to know her more.
Said the maiden, letting down her veil,
“ Hie thee quickly from this fatal dale.”
Ormond thinking, “ Am I man,
 And shall I fly away ?
Never ! let the falling ban
 Fall upon me—I will stay.
Maiden, vowing to be true,
 I vowed, and will not go ;
Wooing not as cowards woo,
 Though love invoketh woe.”
Ormond seeth the maiden’s face,
 And beareth noble pain,
Finding in her pure embrace
 A far-surpassing gain.
He learneth of her secret lore,
 And yearneth for her more and more.

FALLEN.



INORAH'S sin,
Though not the loathly fruit
Of actions dissolute,
Ferments within,

And breeds despair,
That quickly-spreading pest
Which taints the air,
Attacking what is best.

Her charms destroyed,
She stands before our gaze
A shrine of other days,
Now dark and void.

Let her stand yet
An object of disdain,
A warning set
Of self-love's deadly bane.

The inner goal,
The everlasting laws,
The super-sensual cause,
Allured her soul.

Severely true,
And delicately pure,
She kept in view
The ends that shall endure.

With gladness learned
The majesty of Truth,
And all her ardent youth
For Justice yearned.

To highest things
That spotless soul attained,
And then its wings,
Alas! were sadly stained.

Came the black thought,
If there be no reward,
My lot is very hard,
And life is naught.

The foul and sweet,
For aught that doth appear,
As equals meet
In Death's insensate sphere.

Just and unjust,
The cowardly and brave
Commingle in the grave
As common dust.

If all hues blend
In everlasting night,
Poor is Fate's end,
Futile all claims of Right.

Ay! mean indeed,
And worthless is a goal
That yields not to the soul
Its rightful meed.

Reserved no place
For Justice in the plan
Of Time and Space,
How is it asked of Man?

Religions lie;
Virtue and Vice are names;
Save pleasure, void all claims;
All sanctions die.

Great is thy fall;
Vainly dost thou blaspheme
The holy call,
The everlasting scheme.

Deep thy disgrace,
And darkly stained thy name;
Among the slaves of shame
Go take thy place.

COMMONPLACES.

BELZONI said this world is made
For ends that none can see ;
All facts delude, howe'er construed,
While Ay and No agree.

Black evils shock, strange puzzles mock,
Mysteries which none translate ;
And I am mute while some dispute
The equity of Fate.

The child well trained has thereby gained
Advantage far from just,
If endless bliss ensue from this
When dust returns to dust.

The sinful waif is surely safe
When judged upon his deeds,
Who pleads of right his hapless plight
As soil for evil seeds.

Yet whence, if so, the radiant glow
That lights the good man's soul ;
And what the source of that remorse
Which makes the sinner's dole ?

From pouring rain stood villains twain
Under a spreading oak,
When downward came a hissing flame,
And one received the stroke.

The scorched-up knave filled sin-cursed grave,
The other, though as vile,
Learned from the storm to woo reform,
And keep himself from guile.

Now was this fair between the pair ?
Try it with yea and nay ;
But yea astounds, and nay confounds,
Either is hard to say.

I mind a case of foul disgrace :
Tempted by tempter slain
From being swept e'en as she slept,
Sent where remorse is vain.

Thus stained by blood the tempter stood ;
But, as he eyed the dead,
Fierce horrors fell which searched him well,
And blanched his youthful head.

Good works and tears for many years
Adorned his record thence,
And Death arrived to find him shrived
By truest penitence.

Who would demand that sin should stand
Against such fruitful grief ?
Yet stern Fate coiled round one less soiled ;
For her was no relief.

So far 'tis clear that we have here
A puzzling state of things ;
Doubt rules these mists, and aye resists
The keenest ponderings.

Go further yet ; in true scales set
The tendencies of Man,
As shown by facts, by words and acts,
Throughout his tearful span.

Our common bent, by clear consent
Of every sect and creed,
Of every sage, in every age,
Denotes a sorry breed.

Though Virtue calls, though Fear appals,
Though Hope would sweetly bribe,
Though Conscience cries, though Pity sighs,
Though Scorn doth fiercely gibe,

Hell keeps its sway o'er mortal clay ;
The vices daily prowl ;
The pure and true are very few ;
Abound the false and foul.

Now here we find what leads the mind
To musings full of gloom ;
And some have thought these dark facts fraught
With long-predestined doom.

The Calvinist and Fatalist
In such strain dogmatise ;
The Buddhist stands and wrings his hands,
And preaches with wet eyes.

The Atheist and Pessimist
Draw morals near akin ;
While some find still in each soul's will
The shameful germ of Sin.

Others infer, as numbers err,
An operating cause ;
Mankind, they claim, stands free from blame,
The slave of potent laws.

But this they see, if wills are free,
Can scarcely be the case ;
And hence, at cost of all we boast,
Absolve the Human Race.

Man thus denied all grounds of pride,
Relieved of ethic thrall,
May eat and drink, expire and stink,
A very animal.

Calm readers look throughout Fate's book,
Nor judge it by its parts ;
But even these are ill at ease,
If justice rules their hearts.

Man free in all to stand or fall,
They hold as fact approved ;
But why that strong incline to Wrong
By which his will is moved ?

Were Man designed with righteous mind,
Made strong as well as free ;
Then might he win when fighting Sin—
'Tis not so, all agree.

And while 'tis not an ugly blot
Stands on the judgment-roll ;
With chance so slight, how make it right
To curse the human soul ?

How slight that chance, a single glance
At Time's indictment shows ;
Many have run, but few have won,
All glory rest on those.

Be theirs the crown of high renown,
Theirs joy without an end,
But Justice metes as Ruth entreats
To weak ones that offend.

Of this poor stuff there's been enough ;
I end where I began ;
Lock without key this world to me ;
Key without lock is Man.

CHOOSING.



LITTLE one, little one, speak unto me,
Give a tongue to your heart ;
Tell me, little one, tell me free,
Which is the better, nobler part—
What shall your life-mate be ?


Mammon stands at his temple gate,
And brightly shines his calf within ;
Power, who sits enthroned in state,
Raises a staff that I might win ;
While Fame, that grand inebriate,
Opens for me his tempting bin.

Gold does not always soil,
It oft is fruit of honest toil ;
The rule that proud souls claim
Need not be based on deeds of shame ;
The wine that poets drink
Might be free of the Devil's sink.

Then, little one, pretty one, cast your voice,
Fixing the highest, purest choice.
Ho ! ho ! that blush speaks wondrous plain,
My love craves not self-serving gain.
Now, fellow-pilgrim and darling wife,
Pray tell me one thing more :
Shall we two lead the better life
On Time's unlovely shore,

Seeking, my sweet, the ends of Right,
Seeking no other thing;
Working for good till stayed by night,
Whate'er that night may bring?
My own love's heart that knows no guile
Answers me through that tearful smile.

ST. VALENTINE.

“AIN fancy thine! Though words not
coined
Are wanted for the love I bear
Towards my darling wife;
Yet truth forbids me to declare
That thou and I were wisely joined,
Locked wrist to wrist for life.
My righteous doom is constant gloom.
Of many murderers heir,
I hear in dreams their victims' screams,
And ghosts are everywhere:
They cluster in the moments sweet
When thou art by my side;
They show me, while I sit at meat,
Their red wounds gaping wide;
They curse me when at prayer.
Blood foully spilt prohibits peace;
Till death my anguish cannot cease.
But thou art gay as foam of day
That floats across the sky,
And pure as bright, a lovely sight
To angels passing by.
I would the altar could unchain
And give thee to thyself again.”

“The blood my own one did not shed
Can never rest on Randolph’s head;
But if it could, a share were mine,
By Cupid and St. Valentine.
Nathless, I wish the priest could free,
And give me back my maidenhood.
Happy was I as girl could be,
A-playing with the rough old sea,
Or singing in the blithe green wood.
And were it so, dost care to know,
What would I do? Why then I’d woo—
Ay, that’s what I’d be doing;
For Feb’ry’s days are twenty-nine
This selfsame year, O Randolph mine!
 And maids may go a-wooing.
I know a man with large black eyes,
 And swarthy, frowning face;
Full quick is he to sermonise,
 But laggard to embrace.
To such a one I’d humbly kneel,
 And kneeling, thus would pray,
‘Sir Knight, the pangs of love I feel,
 Ah woe! alack-a-day!
That love my fond eyes must reveal;
 Ah me! I waste away;
That love my hot heart can’t conceal,
And ’tis my heart that I obey,
 Ah woe! alack-a-day!
Kind sir, a true compassion show,
Accept my love, and end my woe.’
Ay, that is truly what I’d do;
And why would I this stern knight woo?

For this : his heart is good and pure—

He lives the better life ;


His love once pledged must aye endure ;

Blest she whom he calls wife.

Give me a kiss, O Randolph mine !

For art not thou my Valentine ?”

TESTED.

 HE *Mary* left Old England's shore
To cross the Atlantic main ;
A heavy load she bore
Of grief and pain.

A youth stood gazing at the pier,
Frank Hamilton by name,
Eyeing his mother dear,
Wherein no shame.

Jeff Blake, rough Yankee, smiled with scorn,
And not unbased his mirth ;
In fond arms never borne,
Unloved from birth.

A dark, coarse spirit his in truth
That owned no god but Gold ;
Hater of men from youth ;
Ruthless and cold.

Æolus for the nonce was kind
Towards the Earth's poor worms,
And sent a friendly wind
In lieu of storms.

As molten gold the waters gleamed
Beneath the noon-sun's light ;
As silver sweetly beamed
The waves at night.

Wherefore the saucy *Mary* sped
Unhindered on her way,
And sharks remained unfed,
Waiting their day.

While nearly all on board rejoiced,
And tired hearts found relief,
Young Frank's eyes oft were moist
With homesick grief.

The ocean's monotone annoyed ;
The monstrous dome oppressed ;
The shoreless ring was void
Of peace and rest.

Jeff Blake, as one who found delight
In sentimental tears,
And skilled in words that bite,
In rankling jeers,

Would constantly employ his tongue
To wound the foolish boy ;
And, seeing him well stung,
Would crow with joy.

At length poor Frank, to ease his soul,
Idyllic pleasures sipped ;
Fact known to Blake, who stole
The young bard's script,

Then called the company to hear
A sweetly pretty piece
About a mother dear,
And darling geese.

About a kitten's swelling tail,
And puppy's dark brown eyes,
Fair Polly of the vale,
And tearful sighs.

It was a mean, malicious trick,
Yet none could hear but smile;
How Frank, made ill and sick,
Thought the sea vile!

Dark lines announced the journey's end,
And trunks were packed below;
While friend prepared for friend,
And foe for foe.

When suddenly there came a shock,
And all hearts learned with fear
The ship had struck a rock;
But land was near,

And gallantly the *Mary* strove
To win the parlous race;
As through the waves she clove
Hope grew apace.

Alas! her bulkheads, worn and old,
Gave way beneath the strain,
And dazed ones met the cold,
Relentless main.

Jeff Blake, with life-belt round his waist,
From jamming beams got free,
And plunged with headlong haste
Into the sea.

Soon clear of outstretched hands, he felt
That safety was attained,
All owing to his belt,
For crushed arms pained.

A piercing cry now rent the air,
"Mother! oh! mother dear!"
'Twas Frank in wild despair
That struggled near.

Now was the time to test the heart
And find the man within;
Now worse with better part
Fought hard to win.

A moment solved the inward strife—
Jeff swam towards the boy,
And bought with his own life
A mother's joy.

With numb and swollen hands he placed
The saving belt round Frank;
Said, "To the shore now haste!"
And straightway sank.

Polly conceives that Frank is nice;
As son he's good and kind:
But whether worth his price?
Well, never mind.

BEATEN.



TIME came that old Abdallah died,
Of fertile Aravan
The great and famous Khan,
Whose sway extended far and wide.

His sons that were together born,
Osman and Omar named,
Twain rulers were proclaimed,
And solemn oaths to both were sworn :

By Mehemet, the Avalanche,
Sheik Fazir, bent with age,
And Solyman the Sage,
With others, all renowned and stanch.

Two youths upon the throne gave scope
To all Abdallah's foes,
And many vassals rose ;
But soon was seen how vain their hope.

Mehemet to the South went forth ;
There warfare quickly ceased ;
Brave Omar cleared the East,
And dogged Osman held the North.

Old Fazir, speeding to the West,
Put down its turbulence
By simple reverence,
His last leal deed ere taking rest.

While Solyman, in council wise,
Sustained his useful part
Within the Khanate's heart,
Thence sending men and fresh supplies.

A brilliant peace on every side
Ensued from well-laid plans ;
Back came the youthful khans,
Received by Aravan with pride.

Now Osman, as the elder twin,
Was by Abdallah's word
The long-intended lord
Of sweet and lovely Sherafin,

Who welcomed him with eager eyes,
Hot hands and glowing face ;
But clasped in his embrace,
She soothed her love with tender sighs.

Pity it seems that human joy
Is made so delicate ;
How oft the hand of Fate
Doth break in twain the fragile toy !

Osman, immersed in cares and works,
Grew silent and reserved ;
His true heart never swerved ;
But troth is naught where falsehood lurks.

Young Sherafin, her marriage near,
Before the future quailed ;
And soon the serpent trailed
O'er soul made weak by doubt and fear.

Came news whereat stern Osman swooned—
Not through a woman's sin ;
'Twas not false Sherafin
Who gave his heart its deepest wound.

But Omar, womb and cradle mate,
Had stol'n the maid away.
Man is but mortal clay,
And Osman's love was turned to hate.

Gay Omar hastened to the East,
Scene of his victories ;
And there, 'mid joyful cries,
He made a splendid wedding-feast.

Where glowed a maze of golden light,
And scented waters played,
A mud-stained horseman stayed,
Who brought a letter thus indite :—

“ In Allah's name, who rules the earth,
For all the length of days,
His servant Osman says :
Let Omar's banner be unfurled.

“ Collect your horses and your men,
And keep a good look-out ;
For know, without a doubt,
Osman arrives ere weeks are ten.”

On reading this the bridegroom sighed ;
He hoped that time would cure,
Or other maids allure—
Meant not that warfare should divide.

Now men took sides in Aravan
According to their views ;
Some Osman's cause did choose,
While others went to Omar Khan.

Among them famous Mehemet ;
But Solyman, more just,
O'er dead Abdallah's dust,
Transferred to Osman fealty's debt.

From Omar's lines, ere ten weeks passed,
Advancing steeds were seen—
All knew what this should mean—
Osman was near, the die was cast.

Tents pitched, the day was spent in rest ;
But next morn brought the fight,
Prepared for overnight :
And now to see whose plans were best.

Cool Solyman had thus advised :
" If easy fortunes lure,
And vict'ry seem secure,
Our chance is better as disguised."

Wise thought, for Omar's foemen reeled
Upon the dexter flank,
While Osman's centre shrank
When Mehemet rode o'er the field.

Ere long the shaken cohorts fled ;
The fight seemed early won ;
In truth 'twas but begun,
For Osman all his best troops led.

Aiming a few sharp, crushing blows
At those who stood before,
He turned and swiftly tore
After his other straggling foes.

A bloody time succeeded then,
With Osman in the rear,
And all round everywhere
His rallied right and centre men.

Brave Mehemet refused to fly—
At bay, struck right and left,
Until of arms bereft,
He yielded, crying, "Let me die ;

"I ask no more of Osman Khan,
Abdallah's famous son,
Who well this day has won
Sole right to palmy Aravan."

"Not so," great-hearted Osman said ;
"But swear me to be true,
And we are friends anew ;
I do not Mehemet upbraid."

Omar escaped the gory strife,
At dear price helped to climb,
Just in the nick of time,
The heights where stood his weeping wife.

Moons waxed and waned, but Osman's ire
Grew evermore inflamed ;
A brother's blood was claimed,
Naught else could quench the inner fire.

At length he summoned Solyman,
Saying, "Nor far nor wide
Is justice found denied
To any saving Osman Khan.

"I cannot eat, nor drink, nor sleep,
Nor read, nor write, nor pray ;
And while I waste away
There runs a dog pursued by sheep.

"Go find that false one, heed not cost
Of blood, nor gems, nor gold ;
Until my foe lies cold
Nothing is won, but all is lost.

"Nay, not a word : at once obey,
Give counsel when besought ;
Your oath is come to naught
If vain my orders—hence away !"

Now three weeks thence, as Osman trod
His palace grounds alone,
Through secret way once shown
To Sherafin came feet unshod.

'Twas Omar's wife herself who came :
She marked the once-loved place,
Scene of that last embrace,
Then cried, her wild eyes all aflame,

"Give praise to Allah, Osman Khan,
For Solyman the Wise
Brings hitherwards his prize ;
Let joy-bells ring in Aravan."

“ Ha ! say you so, then now indeed
Is peace and sweet delight :
On Omar's flesh this night,
The ravens, as I live, shall feed.”

She shuddered, then from dark recess
Drew two small somethings there,
And said with sharp despair,
“ See here, O Khan ! and Allah bless.

“ I bring you Omar's babes to slay ;
The ravens duly fed,
He and his issue dead,
Joy shall be yours from day to day.”

The red-cheeked mites looked up and smiled,
And to their mother cooed,
While Osman, dark of mood,
Gazed sternly on each laughing child.

Thus eyeing them, his heart grew sick ;
He could not choose but know
’Twas fond wife's gambling throw
With living dice—a last mad trick.

He stood some minutes lost in thought,
Then said, “ You have your way,
For neither will I slay
These babes nor Omar ; fear not aught.”

“ Now Allah in his goodness bless
The merciful and brave ;
From every evil save
The man who wars not with distress.

“ My heart is full, I cannot speak ;
But long live Osman Khan,
Sole lord of Aravan,
Who fells the strong, but spares the weak !

“ Omar will serve him all his days,
And Omar’s children too ;
Osman shall never rue
A deed that Heaven will appraise.”

Thus Sherafin ; but Osman’s eyes
Were moody as before.
Said he, “ My reign is o’er,
The victor comes, the vanquish’d flies.”

She stared, not knowing what was meant ;
But Omar joined her soon,
While Osman, ’neath the moon,
Rode far away—thus night was spent.

The morning when it came revealed
Strange things to all concerned ;
Aught that is known was learned
From letter duly signed and sealed.

“ To Solyman and Mehemet :—
Osman resigns the throne ;
Omar shall rule alone ;
His sun has risen, mine has set.

“ To Solyman, the wise and just,
And all my servants true,
My last warm thanks are due ;
In these the new Khan well may trust.”

So ran the script. Thus Osman's reign
Came strangely to a close ;
His real fate no one knows,
But never was he seen again.

Renown without and peace within
Remained for Aravan,
And joy for Omar Khan ;
But sad at heart was Sherafin.

Whence said her lord with merry scorn,
" Our Osman, who is dead,
'Tis thought was never wed,
Yet have I seen his widow mourn."

" Ha ! say you so ? Indeed 'tis meet,
My hour has passed away,
While Omar Khan is gay,
Amongst his lemans young and sweet.

" Remembering the wondrous eve
When, lured by bitter woe,
I sought our angry foe,
How should I cease to love and grieve ?

" Ah me ! the merciful and great,
Whose end is wrapped in gloom,
Who rests in ne'er a tomb,
Weeping I ponder on his fate."

COMPENSATED.



CONCERNING hoar Ahmet, the great Reisan
chief,

A curious tale is told.

When full of young blood and over-bold,
He nettled two women sour and old,
Who straightway vowed to bring him to grief.

Which was easy enough, for Reisan wives plan
All weddings amongst the young ;
Wherefore wagged many an ancient tongue,
And Hassa's praises were duly sung
As the right kind of maid for a man.

They omitted to state that her tawny hair
On a mule were well in place ;
Said nothing about her ugly face,
Rich field of rough warts that grew apace—
Oh no ! she was damsel sweet and fair.

The plot was successful, and soon came the day
For Hassa to wear the veil,
Whereunder Ahmet his wife should hail,
Unseen before by ever a male,
Which is the Reisan marrying way.

'Tis a time for the maid of hopes and of fears ;
 Ah ! now her covering shakes,
 The rushing blood her visage forsakes,
 The fingers are moist, the young heart quakes.
'Tis raised—and the Man of men appears.

Not a fraction of hope sad Hassa's heart eased,
 Shut up, and father long dead,
 She knew of men but what she had read,
 Or told her by playmates lately wed.
Not she as they—now her veil was seized !

When Ahmet caught sight of the face of his bride
 He knew what those whispers meant,
 Saw then the old women's vile intent,
 And the raging fires within found vent
Through eyes that glared with fury and pride.

Poor Hassa, on seeing her fine-looking spouse,
 Shrank back in alarmed surprise.
 The well-made youth, with his brilliant eyes,
 Indeed was such as women might prize,
Such as might solace for wrested vows.

A vision of beauty outstripping desire
 He seemed to the ugly maid ;
 And bitter anguish within her preyed,
 As gazing dazzled and sore afraid,
She noted his scornful, loathing ire.

The agony working on Hassa's mean face
 Went out like a sudden dart,

Right to the centre of Ahmet's heart,
There waking the drowsy, better part
To a deed of noble, generous grace.

Said he, softly whispering, "Now love me well,
And these beldams' tricks are vain ;
Hassa supreme in my heart shall reign
While life endures, come joy or come pain ;"
Then took her thence in his house to dwell.

The single condition which Ahmet required
Was easy enough to meet.
Love him ? She worshipped his very feet.
Love him ? Her large heart would cease to beat
Ere its grateful affection expired.


With Ahmet at home she was happiest wife,
And when he went to the fight,
On her knees keeping all day and night,
Hassa prayed loud for her soul's delight,
Lest he should fall in the deadly strife.

It is thought that her prayers were a potent charm,
Specific against the grave ;
For never was man more recklessly brave,
Ne'er chief such chance to his foemen gave
As Hassa's loved lord, whom naught could harm.

Leal Ahmet found joy in his true-hearted spouse,
And comfort, and peace, and rest :
So well was her sterling worth confessed,
That never another he caressed,
Disclaiming what the Koran allows.


They are both still existing, a grand old pair ;
Their children are twice times ten,
Eight handsome women, and twelve strong men,
Who curtsey and bow with reverence when
Hassa uncovers her snow-white hair.

RETRIBUTION.

HEN maiden is free
As flower to the bee,
And then comes her heart's desire,
She feels as the ruined feel ;
Her folly as dire,
Her downfall as real,
Conscience sealing with the same fixed seal.

Of freshness bereft,
Like toy that is left,
She's no meet mate for the leal.
Sowing she shall reap
In the ripening of her blame—
Sorrowfully weep
In the fulness of her shame,
Shall stand as a withered, beggared thing,
And not as a queen before her king.

PITTED.

 WAS Lady Avonmere,
With face unseen,
Lest men should jeer,
That walked in garden green.

Grew strange plant there,
An ugly, bloomless thing,
While all around was fair
And blossoming.
Again she came
When summer days had flown,
Her face still veiled in shame,
To muse alone.

Like past bright hours,
All gaiety had fled;
There lay the gorgeous flowers
Withered and dead.

While wandering depressed
There met her view
A strange plant dressed
In robe of crimson hue.

Noble it seemed,
Though destitute of bloom;
Grandly its red leaves gleamed
Amidst the gloom.

The Lady Avonmere
Now walks unveiled,
Devoid of fear,
By all eyes fondly hailed.

'Tis known she truly loves
The sick and poor ;
See, as she moves,
Rush children from each door.

OLD MARNY.



IS Marny, the ancient fisherman,
A rare old kind is he ;
In his crazy boat, that scarce will float,
He rides on the heaving sea ;
From evening grey till the morning wan
He bides on the moaning sea,
Recking but little of life's brief span,
For a brave old fellow is he.
'Tis said he is rich, but does not itch
For the ease that wealth commands ;
Is willing to give, but prefers to live
Solely by his rough brown hands.
Wishing to be free,
He lives all alone,
In his cottage by the sea,
And consorts with none.
They say he is cold to the over-bold,
And stern with knavish greed ;
But the fisherwives know
Very well where to go
In the day of sorrow or need.
You have seen my nephew, Arnold Gray,
And his wife that was lately a miss ;
Vain minx she that would have her own way,
Very ready for a kiss
And such-like play,

But scarcely a girl, to tell the truth,
Fitting in well with a steady youth ;
Good-looking indeed, but far too gay,
Very much too free with the men of the bay.
Well, here is something she lately wrote
Concerning Old Marny and his boat.

A FLIRT'S STORY.



ARNOLD GRAY was good and staid,
Wise also, save in this,
He chose to love a maid
Unworthy of true man's kiss.
Alas! and alas!
Let the dead past pass.
Mournfully grand he seemed
Standing upon the beach;
"Vainly," he said, "I've dreamed
That earnest love would reach
And true devotion teach
A loveless heart;
Farewell; we part."
Sad for a little time,
I strolled along the shore,
But sorrow soon was o'er.
I listened to the bell-buoy's chime,
Nor thought of Arnold more.
Men smiled, but they are always cheap;
I gaily passed them by,
Rejoicing in the gleaming deep
And golden sky.
Allured by brightness, on I went
Until, where small path wound
Through rocky ground,

Appeared a boatman old and bent,
 Though hale and strong,
 Who slowly moved along,
And seemed on deepest thoughts intent.
I giggled, for the flirting mood
 Came on me with a run,
 And calmly stood,
 Expecting fun.
He heard with clear dismay,
 Then seeing, frowned,
 Then looked around,
As if to spy some other way.
Vain hope! I held the only one,
 Escape was none.
Ah me! I must beware;
 The old Eve rises still,
It breaks out here and there
 Against my will.
Suffice to say that, rudely bold,
 I forced the old man's tongue;
Howe'er, the words thus wrung
 Were brief and cold.
Not used that man should foil,
 I tried another vein,
And broached his nightly toil
 Upon the main:
"What joy to be,
 While others are asleep,
Alone and free
 Upon the wondrous deep!
Ah! would I might at midnight pay
A visit to the noble bay!"


He eyed me sternly, then replied—
 “A young and comely maid,
 Only last Christmastide,
 Such visit paid ;
Whether she liked the noble bay
 I cannot say.”
“ A story ! Oh, sir ! tell it me,
 As one that loves to hear
Anything of the sea,
 To me a friend most dear.”
“ Then be it so ; ’tis briefly told :
 A storm came on at night,
The angry thunders rolled,
 The heavens belched forth blinding light.
I made to shore, and stood awhile,
Humbled, for man seems truly vile
 When Nature’s forces fight.
Ere long I heard a rushing sound,
And saw, when turning round,
A maiden very young and fair,
 Attired in white ;
Her long rich golden hair
 Unloosed and streaming,
 Her large eyes wildly gleaming—
In truth a wondrous sight
As seen amidst each gush of light.
I asked, ‘ What do you here,
 On such a night,
 In such a plight ?
No house is near.’
She answered, with a frightened start,
 ‘ I fly ! I fly !

From my own heart.

Not *that*, for I will die—
No never *that*, the sea shall save ;
He cannot tempt me on the wave.'
And dashing by was lost in gloom.
I searched, but soon saw far away
The damsel sitting in my boat,
Which kept a little while afloat
 Upon the raging bay,
And there she met her doom.
Resounded then a heavy tread,
 A young man running came,
No covering upon his head,
 His eyes, like hers, aflame.
He cried, ' Say, have you seen
 A maiden pass this way ?'
I pointed where the lightning's sheen
 Illumed the foaming bay ;
I pointed to my empty craft,
And then in mocking anger laughed.
 ' Behold,' I fiercely said,
 ' Where last I saw that maid.
Her soul she trusted to the deep,
 And not to you.
She sleeps as stainless maidens sleep,
 In the company of the true ;
And hark ! the ocean bids its bell
Ring out her knell.'
In truth the bell-buoy seemed to toll
Solemnly as for summoned soul."
The old man pausing here, took breath,
 And meanwhile scornful glances dealt ;

My face was, surely, white as death,
So very sick and ill I felt,
But nothing might his hardness melt.
I asked, "And was she really lost?"
Half-hoping for the best.
He answered, with an ugly leer,
"They found her corpse not far from here ;
Within the churchyard on the coast
She lies at rest."
"And that young man?" "He turned and fled,
Doubtless to find some fitting ditch
Wherein the maiden's heart to pitch ;
But wait till Justice tries the dead.
Pray you good-night,
And visions bright."
Although completely stung
By words and looks so grimly tart,
The old man's ghastly story wrung
My callous heart ;
Wherefore I yearned to Arnold Gray,
And prayed him back again ;
Nor asked in vain :
And soon I fixed with willing tongue
My wedding-day.

NOMA THE SONGSTRESS.

HEN 'neath the moon sad Noma sang,
Proud spirit void of rest ;
When through the night her clear
voice rang
Upon the mountain's crest,
Her songs wind-carried reaching to the vales,
Startling the owls, stilling the nightingales :
Then quailing friars crossed their brows,
And scared nuns rose to pray ;
Then weaker to the stronger spouse
Clung fast in wild dismay ;
And even children as they slept,
Disturbed by dreamy fear,
Towards each other slowly crept,
As 'twere some danger near.
Noma the Songstress sang of Man,
Unlocking her soul to the stars,
Pouring out thoughts that overran
Ancient limits and priestly bars—
Sorrowful thoughts, and strong withal,
Their strength derived from bitter love ;
Hence moanings dyed in gloomy gall
Ascended to the skies above.
'Tis clear, indeed, she oft approached
Conceits as hideously black

As ever darkest spirit broached,
 But sweeter feelings drew her back.
Appraising fairly, one might say,
 She wept as blaming life's design,
While giving free, unhindered play
To thoughts that still like bright orbs shine
 Through Time's dark night ;
Themselves indeed the proofs of light
 And heralds of a golden day.
But blind to this and full of zeal,
 A thorough partisan,
She proudly lodged her stern appeal
 Against Fate's ruthless plan ;
Nor recked of missing blissful goal,
 But pledged her body and her soul
 For hapless man ;
Raising her voice as if to tell
 The overhanging spheres
Of one that loved exceeding well
 The heirs of countless tears.
Thus bold and strong, or right or wrong,
She crowned the mountain crest with song ;
Now sweet and low with tender woe,
Now loud with ire and fierce desire :
Standing dark-hued amidst the moon's white glow,
Her large eyes giving forth their soul-fed fire.
 None know of mournful Noma's birth,
 Nor how she got so sadly wise ;
None saw the songstress pass from earth,
 And none know where she lies.
But dead, she sings, her songs remain ;
 For whom her sweet voice drew

To climb the mount they climbed again,
And ever more enchanted grew.
Now those who dared to scale the height
And hear such things at dead of night,
They were indeed but few;
But find you one who trusts you well,
'Twill please him much when none are by,
To test your heart with tuneful spell
He heard beneath the midnight sky.
Three songs thus gathered I have tried
To render in our Northern tongue;
Though doubtless ill have I supplied
The sweetness, force, and tragic pride
Which marked the words when erstwhile sung.
Place all defects to my account,
Nor blame the maiden of the mount.

FIRST SONG.

EVER and ever my hot tears flow :
Alas ! for the hapless race,
Alas ! for the slaves of care and woe ;
Rarely and briefly the joy-beams throw
Their light on a human face.

O'er earth the waters of sorrow stream ;
Its record is full of dread ;
With horrors its gloomy valleys teem,
The Vices laugh and the Virtues scream,
And Wisdom envies the dead.

Darkness reigns over the sons of clay,
A night that shall long endure ;
For where is the seer who dares to say
He sees the glimmer of coming day
Peep out of the black obscure ?

Where is the prophet that dare declare
An end of falsehood and lust ;
That virtuous gladness may fill the air,
And women in loving pride may bear
The fruit of the true and just ?

Who is so blind as not to allow
The proofs of a horrid ban ;

Who so timid as not to avow
The frightful curse inscribed on the brow,
And sealed in the soul of man?

"Like from like," is the sentence I read,
Marked black in the book of doom;
Truly no vision of righteous breed,
Abnormally sprung from evil seed,
Illumines the outer gloom.

Alas! and alas! I needs must weep,
In bitterness fall my tears.
Sooner along the fathomless deep
Its moaning waters shall cease to sweep
Than the Earth know happy years.

SECOND SONG.

THONEY is found in the loves of men :
For the tender maiden sighs,
And gives her youth his kisses agen ;
But shadows of black truths reach their ken,
And the golden glory flies.

The manly lover shall lead his maid
To the priest on bridal morn,
And hearts are hot as the words are said ;
Yet secretly they are sore afraid,
For the free past stands forsworn.

The ardent husband shall take his bride,
And carry her from her own,
Both feeling, for all their joy and pride,
The lower selves to be now allied,
And their purest wishes moan.

The six months wife as she buds shall blush,
Admitting her blissful shame ;
But chilling doubts, as the sweet thoughts
gush,
Shall into the inner temple rush,
And smother the new shrine's flame.

The ruddy fruit of the marriage tree
Is plucked in an hour of pain ;

Not that, however, would hinder glee,
When full heart hankers and fond eyes see,
But Hope brings Fear in its train.

And now, as the chequered years go by,
'Tis well if the fruitful pair,
Content that their blossoms multiply,
As fellow-pilgrims and lovingly,
Shall each with the other bear.

'Tis well indeed if they love to the end,
Avoiding the curse of strife;
But toil shall weary and terrors rend,
And weighted by cares their souls shall bend,
Fulfilling the laws of life.

THIRD SONG.



THE careworn and fear-ruled Human
Race
Is not an unkindly breed,
And Justice an angel's mind will trace
In many a thought of sweetest grace,
In many a fragrant deed.

Charity teaches its tender lore :
Oh ! listen, ye stars above ;
All suffer. But those who suffer more,
The old and crippled, the sick and poor,
Find mercy, pity, and love.

Rarely the feeble appeal in vain
When calling upon the strong ;
Thus sued, he hazards the sword's sharp pain,
And looks on Death with a grand disdain,
As sung in many a song.

When Famine goes raging through the land,
Or Pestilence lifts its head,
Or War strikes hard with his bloody hand,
Then thousands obey the heart's command,
By heroic spirits led.

Where doomed ship plunges, and wrecked
ones scream,

Haste lifeboats over the wave ;
Where scorched walls totter and red flames
gleam,
Where fired gas blasts the colliery seam,
There eagerly press the brave.

Loudly the children of Earth acclaim
A sweet deed daringly done :
When noised abroad by the voice of Fame,
All eyes are alight, all hearts aflame,
And millions rejoice as one.

Affection works in many a way
Whereof I have often sung ;
Spouses and parents its will obey,
Sweethearts and friends acknowledge its sway,
And elders yearn to the young.

Children reign over the rough and coarse,
And babes are lords of the stern,
Their strength to weakness tracing its source,
On wistful kindness basing its force,
A lesson that women learn.

But man is aye to evil inclined,
Is filthy and bloodstained still ;
Maugre the signs of a better mind,
Maugre his actions noble and kind,
Those proofs of a loving will.

THE KNIGHT'S CRUELTY.



SIR Guy de Wentworth sent his men
To seize the smith of Hither Rye,
Who poached at midnight in the glen,
A crime for which he needs must die.

The smith's young daughter Bertha sped
To ply the knight with mournful plea ;
But terror's snows her face o'erspread
When passing by the gallows tree.

The porter would not say her nay
When asking to be let inside ;
"But vainly," quoth he, "will you pray ;
No knight so stern or far or wide."

Sir Guy, howe'er, though hard with men,
Of women knew not overmuch ;
Strict bachelor had lived till then ;
I trow there were not many such.

Now Bertha was exceeding fair,
Had face and form that painters prize ;
O'er white neck swept rich golden hair,
'Neath smooth brows shone large blue-
bell eyes.

Thus, counting waist that claimed embrace,
A voice of soft, melodious tone,
And manner full of witching grace,
She well might strongest wills dethrone.

In truth there was but little need
To play her plugs upon the knight ;
Such charms unaided would succeed ;
Tears added, he was vanquished quite.

This feeling yet he vain would try,
For reasons that shall soon appear,
If maid so pleasing to the eye
Was inwardly what should endear.

So said, " For very righteous cause
Your father's doom has been declared ;
Full clearly known the manor's laws,
And other men have not been spared.

" Nathless, if son or friend will choose
To mount the scaffold in his stead,
The smith nor life nor goods shall lose ;
Come none, then count him as the dead."

It was a lovely summer's day,
The birds sang sweetly on the trees,
The flowers around, so fair and gay,
Diffused their fragrance in the breeze.

The girl by ghastly fears assailed,
Gazed yearningly upon the scene ;
But not for long her brave heart quailed,
Though white cheeks showed what fight
had been.

" My brothers are too young," she said ;
" To ask of friends would be in vain ;
By me then let the law be paid,
And set my father free again."

"Nay, send your lover unto me,
If true, 'tis clear what he will say."

"I own no lover," answered she,
"And, sir, I wish for no delay."

"Ten minutes may the priest attend,
To shrive my soul from sinful stains;
Then let your man make speedy end,
And take this locket for his pains."

With fur-clogged tongue the knight replied:

"An' you consent to be my wife,
The father of Sir Guy's fair bride
Shall go away with more than life."

Which said, the dews of fear and shame
Sat clammy on the wooer's brow;
He knew 'twas right to free, then claim,
But Love such course would not allow.

Trance-struck the maiden seemed to be,
Then down Sir Guy de Wentworth knelt;
"Nay, he is free and you are free;
Through Love such wrongful stroke was
dealt."

"But, sweet one, do not say me nay;
As spouse I promise to be true;
See, at your feet my sword I lay,
Perchance 'twill plead for me with you."

His wooing did not long endure;
Beauty yields quick to valour's thrall;
Full soon the priest made all things sure,
And joy-bells rang in Wentworth Hall.

CHANGES.

ANGELS throng the airy maze,
And they speak to me ;
And there's one who often says,
While he hunts the flying days :
" Not as it used to be."

When I see a heavy brow
Hanging over sordid eyes,
Set in face that owns not now
Knowledge of sweet mysteries ;
Face with lines denoting skill
Learned at Mammon's busy mart :
Witness too of ruthless will,
Servant of a callous heart ;
Then that angel, with a sigh,
Whispers while he hurries by :
" Not as it used to be."


When there comes with wrinkled face,
Trembling hands and timid feet,
One well fit for resting-place,
Where the worms may have their meat ;
One whose brain is soft and weak,
And whose heart is very tired,
Reft of wits that men might seek,
Having naught by maids desired ;

Then the angel rushes by,
Uttering his mournful cry :
 " Not as it used to be."

When the libertine draws near,
 Vile corrupter of the young,
Whom he tempts with ardent leer,
 Whom he wins with skilful tongue ;
Devil in an earthy frame,
 Setting snares for maids and wives,
Finding joy in bitter shame,
 Broken hearts and blackened lives ;
Then, while flashing wings pass by,
Falls a deep-toned angry cry :
 " Not as it used to be."

When my eyes are comforted
 By a vision rare indeed,
Sighting mortal, Duty led,
 Sower of eternal seed ;
One who sternly worships Right,
 One who fiercely treads on Wrong,
Soldier of the holy fight,
 Hero-spirit brave and strong ;
Then that angel stays awhile,
Gazing with a dazzling smile,
And with ringing voice he cries,
Rousing echoes in the skies :
 " Not as it used to be."

TRYSTING.

 'ER the sands sped Nellie Clare,
When the breeze was blowing,
Full of joy and void of care,
To her love tryst going;
Streams of chestnut-coloured hair
Down her shoulders flowing;
Brown eyes freely everywhere
Merry glances throwing;
Red cheeks, smitten by the air,
Glistening and glowing.

Straight toward the meeting-place,
O'er the shingle hieing;
Longing for the strong embrace,
Prudish nerves defying;
Yearning for the handsome face
On warm lips relying;
Feet heart-urged to quicker pace
Willingly complying;
Swift feet to the white cliff's base
Like two arrows flying.

Soon her hungry eyes were fed:
Ralph, his word redeeming,
Lay upon a rocky bed,
Gulls around him screaming

But he moved not at her tread,
And his life-blood streaming
Formed a pool of deepest red,
In the sunlight gleaming.
There he lay all crushed and dead,
Hence an end of dreaming.

Brown-eyed Nellie trysts no more,
Fast to one love keeping ;
Learns instead the higher lore,
Sorrow's harvest reaping,
And is good to sick and poor,
Spurning selfish weeping.
But the sweet sad heretofore,
When the stars are peeping,
Clasps her on that fatal shore,
And she would be sleeping.

WHAT THE FIREMAN HEARD.



FIREMAN, fireman, quickly mount ;
Son of Duty, do not stay ;
There, aloft, scared creatures count
Every second of delay.

Blistered is their hiding-place ;
Quick, O fireman ! pray be quick ;
Red flames will those babes embrace,
Fiery tongues their blue eyes lick.

Ha ! the cracking window gleams ;
Faster, fireman, faster climb ;
Listen to the mother's screams ;
Now or never is the time.

In ! dash in, whate'er awaits,
Truest glory or the grave ;
Tender-hearted are the Fates
In their dealings with the brave.







